

PRIME ASSETS

Industrial park has marine theme

Helensville development is being billed as a one-stop shop for boating on the west coast, writes **Colin Taylor**

A MULTIMILLION-DOLLAR marine industrial park and a 100-berth marina development promise to give a major economic boost to the tourism and farming town of Helensville 40 minutes northwest of Auckland.

Waypoint Industrial Park is being built on an undeveloped 19ha block of farmland bounded on three sides by the Kaipara River and situated on the northwest fringe of the township.

The Waypoint Industrial Park development company is owned by boat-builder Craig Ross, whose Whenuapai-based company Calibre Boats will be the first tenant of the new industrial complex.

"We have a big picture for Waypoint," says Olaf van Daal, chief executive of Calibre Boats, who joined the company in July last year and is responsible for marketing the project.

"The whole industrial park will have a marina theme and encumbrances will be placed on building to ensure we have a top-notch precinct."

Stage one comprises the construction of two boat-building sheds totalling 4200 sq m which will constitute the new home of Calibre Boats.

This stage, costing around \$8.5 million, began in August and is due for completion in February.

An initial loan arranged through Global Pacific gave Waypoint the money it needed for development costs, consent applications, site preparation and construction of the stage-one boatbuilding complex.

"It was not a straightforward bankable deal but, by refinancing the existing debt and revaluing the land, we were able to get the project under way," says Global Pacific finance broker Ross Hyde.

Stage two comprises the construction of 22 industrial units with a total

area of 4600 sq m. Building of the units will begin early next year and is due to be finished mid to late 2008.

Stage two will cost much the same as stage one and the units will be available for lease to other marine industry businesses. The planned marina will have 100-plus 8m to 12m berths.

Van Daal says he is already fielding inquiries from interested parties, even though the complex has not been extensively publicised, and the Calibre Boats complex will be just the first of a cluster of marine-related businesses envisaged for the new industrial park.

One of the world's largest marina developers is interested in developing a dry dock and marina which van Daal believes would be the only such facility on the west coast.

"Once we have the dry dock and marina, we can think of boat refurbishments and refits, which in turn creates more business.

"A ferry service between Helensville and Dargaville is another long-term possibility.

"We see this industrial development as a unique opportunity, not just for boat builders, but for associated businesses that supply the boat-building industry such as stainless steel companies, upholsterers and electricians.

"We aim to create a one-stop shop for boating on the west coast."

van Daal says even the access to the industrial park will be designed to attract retail business.

"It won't be just a simple road but a tree-lined boulevard that visitors can walk along and buy a cup of coffee and cafe food en route."

He says the Waypoint plan will probably take up to 10 years to fully realise.

"We will take it step by step but, ultimately, we believe the value of the



IN THE LOOP: Waypoint Industrial Park's developers — (above, from left) Ross Hyde, Craig Ross and Olaf van Daal — say the project is an opportunity for boat builders and associated businesses.

PICTURE / AERIAL IMAGERY

fully developed industrial estate will be around \$150 million."

Ross believes the project will see the creation of "a first-class industrial precinct with a marine theme that will bring high-calibre industry to Helensville".

He founded Calibre Boats in 2002 and the company has grown to employ 40 staff, which will make it one of Helensville's biggest employers when it moves.

He and brother Phil made his first fibreglass launch in a woolshed on their parents South Head farm, turning the fibreglass-moulded hull over with a farm front-end loader tractor.

Today, the company makes its own brand of deep V hull sports fishing boat, the Tournament 745 (7.45m long) and is about to produce the first Tournament 875 (8.75m long), designed

to handle open water and cross-harbour bars like that at the entrance to Kaipara Harbour.

Calibre Boats also built Earthrace, a biofuel-powered boat that this year came close to achieving a record-breaking circumnavigation of the globe.

The company is now building a \$2.5 million luxury power sail yacht that is intended to be a prototype for production.

It also makes moulded fibreglass water taxis and is in negotiation with Middle Eastern and Australian interests for fleets of water taxis.

This is in addition to its latest secured global deal, the marketing and production of an underwater scuba scooter.

"Most of our products are customised," says Ross. "We specialise

in fibreglass composite building and we also have an engineering shop on-site so we can take projects right through from start to finish. It's real Kiwi know-how, can-do enterprise."

He said the company recently realised that boatbuilding skills could be applied to other product and it had diversified into camper vans and horse floats.

"We are also doing cabinetry for commercial fit-outs and specialised engineering jobs such as gates and hydraulic lifts."

Ross said he bought the land two years ago and had worked with van Daal during the past year to develop the long-term plan for the industrial estate.

The Rodney District Council as well as the Rodney Economic Development Trust have been supportive of

the development project.

Valerie Freeman, the trust's chief executive, says it is keen to encourage industries to the region that have the potential to generate exports and provide economic benefits to the district.

"Calibre Boats is an employer offering skilled jobs and career pathways which is especially helpful for Helensville where there aren't many jobs," Freeman says.

The closure of the Kaipara Dairy Co in the late 1980s was a blow to employment and the economy of the area. Established in 1911, the dairy factory was the town's largest employer.

But led by the development and popularity of the Parakai hot springs resort 5km west of Helensville, the region has benefited from the growth of healthy tourism industry offering a range of attractions and activities.

AROUND THE BLOCK

BARFOOTS GROWS

■ Barfoot & Thompson has opened a dual residential and commercial office in Manukau and appointed three new branch managers. Brett Trigger is manager of the Manukau Residential branch which has opened in Cavendish Drive. Upstairs at the same site, Peter Churchill heads the South Auckland Commercial branch. Coming in from Premium Real Estate, Cheryl Whiting has been appointed the manager of Barfoot & Thompson's Parnell branch, which has relocated to 300 Parnell Rd.

CRYERS SELLS ZELANIAN

■ Colliers International brokers Greg Goldfinch and Andrew Hooper have negotiated the sale of a 1165 sq m warehouse with 184 sq m office space on a 3024 sq m site at 7 Zelanian Drive, East Tamaki. Cryers Investments sold the site for \$1.68 million to an owner occupier.

QUEEN ST OFFICES

■ A 726 sq m office floor at 300 Queen St has sold post Bayleys Total Property auctions for \$1.44 million through Dominic Ong and Cameron Melhuish of Bayleys Auckland Central office. The floor contains six separate office suites, with some short-term tenancies in place.

ALBANY INDUSTRIAL UNIT

■ Unit C at 6 Piermark Drive, Albany, comprising 708 sq m of office and warehouse space has been sold by Garrison Properties for \$1.3 million through Elliott Molesworth, Len Storck and Richard Kirke, of CB Richard Ellis North Auckland. Molesworth and colleague Euan Stratton also sold 343 sq m of warehouse/office space at 53 Porana Rd, Glenfield, for \$720,000 on behalf of Callan Investments.